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OR,  
**EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY.**

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET  
FORTH IN THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER  
DIVINES, AND OF THE CHURCHES IN HOLLAND.

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**Original Communications.**

*For the Religious Monitor.*

**THE REDEMPTION AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.**

*[Continued from page 214.]*

EPHESIANS, v. 25—27. *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, &c.*

**PART II.**

**THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND THE PURIFICATION AND GLORY OF THE CHURCH.**

The distinction between *fear* arising from conscious guilt, and *shame* arising from the turpitude of sin, is no theological nicety. It is founded in nature, is noticed by philosophical writers upon the affections and passions of the human heart, and is asserted in scripture. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Not only is sin the just ground of terror, but—"unto us also, O God, belongeth shame and confusion of face." Accordingly, God who knoweth the nature of man, hath adapted with infinite wisdom the rich and admirable remedy of the gospel, to his whole powers, passions and circumstances. The Saviour of the church is not a partial deliverer; he does not make the offence of her sin to cease, and then leave her as a drudge or slave, to groan and writhe under its tremendous dominion, or as a leper, loathsome and abhorred. No: the spiritual work of the Lord is perfect. The blood of the cross whilst it removes guilt, the cause of fear, gives boldness and confidence in the presence of God. "The church is washed, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of her God."

It seems more easy, indeed, to apprehend how the death of Christ procured the remission of sin, than how it can be influential in producing personal holiness. "Great is the mystery of godliness." But the whole system of revealed truth is one great body of doctrine. Its author is the God of order, who has not more certainly established connexion, dependance and harmony in the kingdom of nature, than in the great system of truth, and salvation. And as that man only is a skilful anatomist and surgeon who knows the relations, connections and places, in the living body, of the different systems of organs, vessels and members;—so, he only is skilful in the word of righteousness who knows and maintains the mutual connections, bearings and dependencies of the great truths in the Bible, upon each other. But let us come to the point. All we have to say upon the subject, we shall comprise in our answers to the two following questions:

I. Is there any connection between the death of Christ and the sanctification and glory of the church?

II. What is that connection?

Quest. I. We would answer the first question and establish the fact by the following considerations:

1. From the language of the Levitical law. Every one who has read the book of Leviticus must be sensible, that such a close connection subsisted between the legal atonement and legal purifications, that without the shedding and sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, there was no cleansing according to the law. How stood the law in regard to the leprosy, that strong emblem of our defilement by sin? See the law laid down at length in Levit. xiv. It was imperative on the priest, first to make an atonement by sacrifice, then to apply the blood by sprinkling to the unclean person, and lastly to pronounce him clean and fit for society. Again the ordinance of the scape-goat recorded Lev. xvi. is quite in point; and also the solemn yearly expiation, the grand subject of that chapter. Of the two, the one of them slain as a sacrifice for sin, pointed out the Lord Jesus as dying for our sins, and thus procuring our justification; the other that escaped, pointed out his resurrection, his being quickened by the spirit, his victory over every enemy, and the church's victory in him over all her enemies, by the total removal of sin, and in her entire and final sanctification. xvi. 30.—"For at that day, shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins, before the Lord."

In the ordinance too respecting the purification of the mother, the language asserting the connexion between atonement and purification, is equally explicit. Lev. xii. 6. "She shall bring a lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering, and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and

she shall be clean." But these Levitical ordinances were types emblematical of the doctrines and blessings of salvation: Let the scripture be its own interpreter. "The law had a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ." If shadows or types, then, they were a representation and pledge of a future and real sacrifice, and a real sanctification by the blood and Spirit of Christ. The ix. chap. of the Hebrews is a key to these Levitical ordinances. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." My hearers, consider that Christ your great antitypical scape-goat and atoning sacrifice, is made righteousness and sanctification to those only that apply him.—A Saviour unappropriated will be no Saviour to you. "To as many as received him, is the privilege given to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

2. The New Testament, without any figure, represents the holiness of the church in its commencement, and progress, and consummation, as entirely owing to the death of Christ.

If we speak of the change from sin to holiness, from enmity to love, which is the fulfilling of the law, in its incipient state, then, we find scripture affirming, that reconciliation, love, friendship and conformity to God, constitute an eminent effect of the death of Christ. Col. i. 21, 22. "And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." The spiritual resurrection of the soul from the state of death in sin, to a new and holy life, is thus expressly connected with the death and resurrection of Christ. Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6,—10. "But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." In and through the blood of Christ Jesus, we cease to be strangers and foreigners, we become "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, whilst it relieves the conscience from pain and fear, generates a disposition to serve the living God. Heb. ix. 16. In Rom. vi. 3—8. the apostle emphatically teaches, that as sure as Christ was crucified for the sins of his people, so sure shall their old man,

their body of sin, (that is) their whole system of unholy dispositions and affections, be crucified and exterminated; so sure shall they, in virtue of his death and resurrection, break off from the service of sin and in due time have for ever done with their sinful habits, acts, connections and pleasures. Again, the believer's deliverance from the law as a covenant of works, his marriage to Christ and his consequent production of fruit unto God, are expressly ascribed to the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. Rom. vii. 4. "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

If we speak of holiness in its progress towards perfection, we shall be compelled, at every step, to acknowledge the presence and efficacy of the blood of atonement. We speak of the beginning, progress and perfection of holiness, merely because it is a gradual work, and not a single act like justification; nevertheless, holiness, is but one entire blessing, which if rightly attributed, at one moment and at one step, to the blood of redemption, is equally so, at every moment and at every step. Thus, Titus ii. 16. "The great God even our Saviour Jesus Christ, gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The word here rendered *redeem* in Luke xxiv. 21. denotes the deliverance of Israel from the low and servile condition to which the Romans had subjected them, and the word rendered *purify* is applied in the gospels to the healing and cleansing of lepers.—When applied there to redemption by Christ, they point out its virtue in delivering the church from the baser servitude, and more loathsome leprosy of sin. If any man (any believer) sin, he obtains peace and cleansing by going anew, as at first, to that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and puts his case into the hands of his advocate anew, who stands continually in the presence of God, pleading the merits of his blood in behalf of his redeemed people. The church is not only sanctified at first, but "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord," (Eph. ii. 21.) by the renewed application of the blood of sprinkling.

If we speak of the church's holiness as perfected in heaven, the reason why she is before the throne without spot or wrinkle is thus assigned, "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple." Rev. vii. 14, 15. "You that were enemies hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." Col. i. 21, 22.

You may perhaps think that enough has now been said on this point; but, on reading the scripture to find out the leading connections in which the death of Christ is there stated, we were so struck with the continual introduction of his death as the grand



foundation, principle and motive of every branch of duty, that we must ask your indulgent attention a few moments longer.—In the golden chain of divine truth, the death of Christ is as it were that which fastens every individual link, to all the rest.—It is the key stone of the arch. It is the central point, from which the lines of truth, like rays from the body of the sun, diverge in every direction, or rather, to which every blessing and truth in the Bible may be traced up. He is the Alpha and the Omega of every holy habit and act, grace and exercise in the church's whole life of faith and holiness and of all her comforts and triumphs. If we slightly glance at the several branches of holiness, you will see that they all have a fundamental bearing upon the death of Christ.

The fear, love, and service of God, would never have had any existence among fallen men but for the death of Christ.—“There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.” Pardoning mercy and love through the blood of atonement, soften, allure, subdue and disarm, the rebellious sinner.

Love, the noblest principle of all duty, is but the reciprocation of an impulse of the love of God communicated to us.—“We love him because he first loved us.” But it is his love in sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins, it is Christ loving us even unto death, that makes obedience easy and delightful, that makes the believer of it, design, venture, and pursue all for Christ. “The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Prayer, a main branch of godliness, if stripped of its relation to the doctrine of the cross, would be nothing else than the whinings and cries of a malefactor led to execution, and substantially the howlings and roarings of the inhabitants of the pit. “But in Christ Jesus, we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” Eph. iii. 12. “Having therefore, brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith. Heb. x. 19—22. We might have told God our wants, but what supply could we ever have had, if Jesus our high priest had not first given himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, and then passed into the heavens.”—But because he hath done so, “we may now come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.” Heb. iv. 15, 16. All saints pray, and their prayers are graciously heard and returned into their bosom, because they ascend up before the throne in a cloud of incense out of the angel's hand, who is none other than Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the church. Rev. viii. 3, 4. “Another angel came and stood at the altar having a golden censer, and

there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand." Let us then, ever draw nigh to God under the belief, that there is the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; that a great High Priest is over the house of God, having a golden censer with much incense, and thus we shall not draw nigh in vain.

Again, it is the view of the Lamb slain, which unites the church with the angels and with every creature, and animates the grand chorus in that song of joy, thanksgiving and praise, which filled heaven and earth. Rev. v. 7—12. If sinners are ransomed from slavery, exalted to the dignity of kings, and constituted priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices, the connection of all these with the death of Christ, is thus traced: "they sang a new song, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests."

Again, the Lord enjoins us to walk humbly with our God.—This branch of religious duty, is also produced and promoted by the doctrine of the cross. It hides pride from man, both the pride of reason and of righteousness. In the work of redemption, we may say "where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. iii. 19. Thus, again, the apostle argues, Rom. iii. 25—27, "We are justified of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith."

Indifference to the world, another important duty of the Christian life, is also attributed to the cross of Christ. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. vi. 14.

So very distinguished were the attainments of Paul in grace and holiness, that the world's glories and charms, no more attracted or drew his affections, than the circumstances of a man writhing in agonies on the cross, would delight the eye of the beholder; and he was as dead to it, as if he were actually expiring in torments, and closing his eyes on all below the sun.—Converse much with the cross, as Paul did, and like him, you will be weaned from the world, and rise above it.

Again, the mortification of sin, is expressly attributed to the death of Christ. "We are buried into his death, we are buried with him by baptism into death. Our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom. vi. 3, 4—6.

The crucifixion of Christ for us, causes the crucifixion of sin in us.

"To do justly," is another branch of duty. "Now the grace of God which bringeth salvation by the cross, teaches to live righteously. For what the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Rom. viii. 3. Receive us, we have wronged no man, we have defrauded no man." 2 Cor. vii. 2.

"To love mercy," is another duty. Pity, bowels of mercies, fervent zeal, vehement desires for usefulness in the world, willingness to labour and suffer according to the will of God for the salvation of men, are principles that are thoroughly learned nowhere but in the cross of Christ. All such principles the apostle traces up to the dying love of Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

It was in the belief of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, that the worthies of old wrought righteousness, subdued kingdoms, quenched the violence of fire, stopped the mouths of lions, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 1 Pet. i. Heb. xii.

Finally, the triumphs of the christian over every enemy of his salvation, are connected with and owing to the death of Christ. From it comes deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan. Zach. ix. 11. "As for thee, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The world: "By the cross, the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Satan's malicious accusations against them as in the case of Job and of Joshua the high priest. Zach. iii. 1. "And the accuser of the brethren is cast down who accused them day and night before God. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." Rev. xii. 11.

Our text assures us that the glorious consummation of this work of holiness in believers, is owing to the same blood.—"Christ gave himself for the church, therefore, she is at last holy and without spot."

We have dwelt thus long upon the point, not so much to give you information, for ye know these things already, but with a view through the blessing of God, to make a permanent impression on your hearts. What we have said we believe to be not only agreeable to the written word of God, but to the experience of every sanctified person. Did not David know, believe and act upon this doctrine, when he prayed "wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me

with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," Psal. li. Did not Micah declare his belief in this doctrine, that God, would purify the souls and pardon the guilt of his people, in performance of the truth to Jacob and of mercy to Abraham, which he had sworn to our fathers, saying, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Hear how Paul declares his experience in regard to the whole life of faith and holiness. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20.

From the great mass of scripture testimonies, the conclusion is just and unvaried, "that from the beginning to the perfection of the new creature, the virtue of the blood of Christ is all powerful and all important; that it is at the beginning, middle and end of every good work." What then must have been the consequence, had this mysterious doctrine never been revealed, understood, believed and acted upon? Why, there would have been no fear, love, reverence and worship of God, among men; no prayers, no joy, no thanksgiving, no hope, no humility, justice and mercy in our world. Just such as Paul describes the Romans to have been, would all men have been, in all ages; one universal mass of crimes, misery and ruin. It would have been to make this world, as a great divine hath said, "one of the outer rooms of hell, where a set of creatures lived, who knew their duty, but were never persuaded to do it." Endeavour then, to get fast hold of this doctrine in your understandings, judgments and affections, and maintain it against all temptations and opposition, for it is your very life. Your spiritual enemies will endeavour to wrest from you, your faith, hope, holiness and comfort; but dally not with temptations, as to this great doctrine of christian faith and practice. Maintain a high esteem of the blood of the covenant. Christ is the way of life to you.

*(To be Continued.)*

*For the Religious Monitor.*

#### REMARKS ON THE DEPENDENCE OF MAN,

FOUNDED ON PSALM CXXVII. 1. *Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain.*

This psalm is entitled a song of degrees for Solomon. He was appointed to build a temple in Jerusalem and reign over the kingdom of Israel, and the psalm appears to be penned with a particular reference to these things. The main design of it is to remind him of his dependence on God as a labourer in his church and a prince over his people. In vain should he collect from surrounding nations the best materials and the most skilful



workmen for building a temple, in vain should he exercise his unrivalled wisdom, and exhaust his boundless treasures; unless the Lord favoured the work by his providence, his counsels would be turned into foolishness, and all his labours marred. In vain should he set the most faithful watchmen upon the walls; unless the Lord kept them, the foe, the famine, the plague, or some one of the thousand instruments with which the treasures of vengeance are stored might enter and destroy the city. And as both the temple and city were types of the church, the words may be viewed as applicable to all believers in every age and society. They are all the temples of God's Holy Spirit, and in their collective capacity one great building of mercy of which Christ is the foundation and chief corner stone. They are all citizens of Zion, and in their collective capacity one glorious city of which Christ is the Mighty king.

The church like a house or city is a place of rest and shelter; the Lord is the habitation of his people to give them rest, and shelter from the storm and the heat, and his providence is around them as their wall of defence. The church like a house or city is a place of residence; the Most High is the constant guest, the kind father in this house, the glory in the midst of this city. In like manner the church is compactly built together, a place of society, where God and his people dwell together in unity and love. In like manner she is separated from the world; like a city walled in, or a garden enclosed, she dwells alone and is not reckoned among the nations. She is also a place remarkable for strength, for beauty, and for the order that is maintained in her: and like a house or city she has those who build her and those who watch over her. The prophets and apostles were noted builders and watchmen. They are called the foundation, not as Christ on whom men are built, but as those who commenced the work of building on him, and gave the rules by which those who come after them are to be guided. All ministers are builders and watchmen, as through them God is pleased to add to his church and maintain her purity. And the same is in some respects true of all believers, as none of them is to live to himself, as all are to seek the good of Zion and the salvation of souls. But in vain the builders build, in vain these watchmen wake, unless the Lord give his blessing. Where he has purposes of mercy no enemy without, no weakness within can cause them to fail.—Where he has no such purposes, no friends, no force can bring them to pass. The doctrine, then, which is taught in the psalm is simply this, In every relation in which man is considered, he is a dependent being; yet God has appointed means and we are authorized and obligated to use them. The first truth taught, and the one which we shall at present consider, is

THAT MAN IS A DEPENDENT BEING.

I. He is dependent on God for all things, as a creature under the care of his providence. This is a truth clearly taught in the

scriptures, and generally acknowledged, yet much overlooked.—  
 In the uniformity of the divine procedure we forget his hand;  
 whereas in the most common, natural and unimportant events,  
 his hand is as much concerned as if they happened by a miracle.  
 For providence extends to all things even the least. The hairs  
 of our heads are numbered, not one of them shall perish, nor  
 shall the sparrow fall to the ground without the pleasure of our  
 heavenly Father. From God we receive our food and raiment  
 in the common course of nature as really as if the ravens brought  
 them or as if they were created immediately for our use. He  
 that clothes the lilies of the field which neither toil nor spin, and  
 feeds the fowls of heaven which neither sow nor reap nor gather  
 into barns, clothes and feeds us by different means but not less  
 than them. It is true of us as creatures, as well as believers, that  
 God makes all the difference between us, and from him we receive  
 whatever we enjoy; *For in him we live and move and have our  
 being*; without him we can move neither hand nor foot; with-  
 out him we have neither power nor skill to do the smallest matter.  
 It is not the industry, nor wisdom of man, but the power and  
 goodness of the Lord which, *make the grass to grow and herbs for  
 the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth,  
 and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his  
 face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.* The  
 prophet Hosea beautifully describes the wants of man as crying  
 to the corn, the wine and the oil that they might be supplied;  
 these are represented as crying to the earth that they might be  
 produced; the earth as crying to the heavens for rain; and the  
 heavens as crying unto God that they might be filled with show-  
 ers. When the heart of the king of Babylon was lifted up he  
 exclaimed, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house  
 of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honour of  
 my majesty.* But the same hour he is driven forth among the  
 beasts of the field which seek their food from God, to learn from  
 them that, *The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and  
 giveth it to whomsoever he will, that the inhabitants of the earth are  
 nothing; and that he doeth according to his will in the army of  
 heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay  
 his hand, or say to him, What doest thou?* In like manner we  
 cultivate the powers of the mind, cherish the kind or noble af-  
 fections of the heart, improve the beauty and grace of our per-  
 sons, collect riches and provide for our comfort and respectability  
 in the world, taking all the credit to ourselves as if we had been  
 our own creators, or the lords of our own providence; whereas  
 it is God *Who killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down and he  
 lifteth up, he maketh poor and he maketh rich, he bringeth down to  
 the grave and he bringeth up.* To him we are indebted for being,  
 for the powers of the mind and body, for all that is excellent  
 in our characters, for all that is comfortable in our conditions.—  
*The rich and the poor meet together and the Lord is the maker of*

them all. All the different classes of men meet together, or agree in this, that they all are equally dependent on God, who hath made one man poor, another rich; one wise, another simple; one prosperous, another afflicted. But you may say, Though we receive all from the hand of God, is not some credit due to our industry and wisdom in the management of our affairs? No; for *It is God who giveth thee power and wisdom to get wealth.* Yet you may say, May we not have credit for the good use of our possessions? No, not in the least; for if you have an heart to use and to make a good use of your possessions, this also cometh from the Lord. *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.* Cease then ye rich to glory in your riches, ye wise to glory in your wisdom, ye upright to glory in your uprightness. All that you have is from the Lord, and only brings you more deeply in his debt. Let us all, while diligently using the means, look to God for our daily wisdom, as if his voice only could instruct us. Let us acknowledge him not only in great events, in leading to the discovery of things useful or strange, in bringing about great revolutions, in setting up kings and forms of government; let us acknowledge him not only when in difficulties and straits, but in *all* our ways and he will direct our paths.

II. As a believer, man is dependent on God as the God of grace and salvation. The great difference between our dependence on God as the Lord of providence, and as the God of grace is—that the care of providence extends to all, while the blessing of grace is confined to a few. In respect to providence *The goodness of God is over all his works*; in respect to grace, *Many are called but few chosen.* God gives natural, as well as spiritual life and strength, wisdom and beauty; but natural blessings are common, while those which are spiritual, are only given to those for whom they are prepared. There is no doctrine more plainly taught in the Scriptures than our absolute dependence on the free and sovereign grace of God for salvation, yet none which men are more unwilling to receive or more ready to corrupt.—It is the grand characteristic of the wicked, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ, not so much enemies to many other doctrines of the first importance, as enemies to that which is the grand characteristic of the gospel system, the doctrine of justification by free grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The Scriptures, however, on this subject, speak a language which can never be rendered more plain or forcible. They exclude all grounds of boasting, even the least in the best of men, as though they had at all made themselves to differ from the vilest of the human family, or from the devils in hell; or had received any grace of which they are possessed either as the fruit or reward of their own labours. And reason confirms this doctrine of the word. Are you a Christian? Why was you not



a heathen, a hypocrite, a devil? Can you give any other reason but that it pleased God to choose you and make you to differ? So far as the circumstances of life may have had an influence in producing this change, you must at once acknowledge the sovereign hand of God. Did you sit in council with the Almighty when he formed you, and direct him when and where you should be born, and what should be the circumstances of your life? Can you assign any reason why you was not your careless neighbour, or a heathen, why you was not the scoffing Ishmael, the profane Esau, or the treacherous Judas, rather than what you are, except that such has been the good pleasure of God? Hath not the potter power over the clay to mould it into whatever form he pleases, and could not God have made you any other person or object, as easily as what you are? Do you still say, that you are what you are, not by free and unmerited grace, but by the choice of your own will? Why we ask has your will been determined to a proper choice? It was either God working in you to will, or it was something else. Do you say that it was not God, but your own more enlarged and correct views of things which has influenced you to choose what others have rejected? To whom are you indebted for these views?—It was either God who enlightened you or something else. Do you say that it was not God, but your own more careful attention to the means? Why have you attended to those means which others have neglected? It was either God who stirred you up to this, or it was something else. Do you say that it was not God? Still we may ask for the cause of causes, and trace the matter step by step, till you must own the hand of God. If as some suppose God has given to all an equal chance of life; and equal power and disposition to improve it, then all must equally improve or slight it, and all be saved or lost. But the truth is, we are not only indebted to God for that which occasions the first, we are indebted to him for that which occasions all the difference between us; all saving blessings are promised, are to be sought by prayer, are represented as coming down from the Father of lights, and as being not the natural property of men but the free gifts of God. The christian himself is not his own, he is bought with a price.

We are not self-taught, but taught of God. *The natural man receiveth not the things of God neither can he know them, not merely because he will not, but because they are spiritually discerned.* The same kind of strong language which is used to express the divine perfections is used to express the total depravity both of the mind and will. God is truth, is love, so man in respect to the will is enmity, in respect to the mind he is darkness. The head and the heart are the supposed seats of the mind and will, and *the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint; and there is no soundness in us.* Instead of the mind being sound and the will only depraved the will is often better than either the ability or



mind, *The spirit may be willing when the flesh is weak*; sometimes men CANNOT do the things which they would; and TO WILL is present with them, but how to do good they find not. The Spirit is promised to lead into all truth, which implies that all is lost and can only be recovered by his teaching. In vain men are favoured with wise and faithful parents and teachers, with the greatest powers of mind, with every other advantage; in vain they turn their attention to the study of divine things; in vain become wise in the letter of the law; all will be total darkness, even where there seems to be the most abundant light, until they are taught of God. They may know things as men know the objects of which they dream or hear, but not as those who are awake, and see things as they are. And how often do we see this doctrine of the word illustrated in providence. How many favoured with every advantage give evidence, that they know not God; while others make their way through every disadvantage to the knowledge of the truth. God works contrary to the labours and expectations of men, to prove the work his own, and to display his sovereignty, his power, and his grace.

We do not justify ourselves but are justified of God. We cannot do any thing either to satisfy for sin, or move God to forgive it. In vain should we make the tears of repentance to flow like rivers; in vain make the smoke of victims to arise from thousands of altars; in vain perfume the heavens with incense; in vain offer to God thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; in vain offer to him that which of all earthly possessions is most tenderly beloved, "the first born, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul;" in vain should we make Lebanon the altar, its vast forests the fuel, and the numerous herds which graze in its pastures or range through its woods the victims, *Lebanon is not sufficient to burn nor the beasts thereof for a burnt offering*. In vain should we take to ourselves nitre and much soap to wash away spots deeper and darker than the spots of the leopard, or the hue of the Ethiopian; *our iniquity would still be marked before God*. Yea, though we should wash ourselves in snow water and make our hands never so clean, yet would God plunge us in the ditch and our own clothes would abhor us. Not all the combined efforts of saints and angels could in the least efface the smallest stain of sin; nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse from this pollution, and whenever applied, it *cleanses from all sin*.

Nor when the work has commenced in justification, have we any power to carry it on. We cannot bear fruit except we abide in Christ; without him we can do nothing. Nor can we have an inclination to what is right, for God must work in us to WILL, as well as to do. We cannot speak aright, for *How*, says Christ, *can ye, being evil, speak good things*. We cannot think aright; according to Paul, we are not sufficient to think a good thought. Nor can we even pray to God to help us to do some, or all of

these things, for *we know not how to pray, but the Spirit must make intercession for us.* And in a word, however contrary to natural notions, and however difficult to be understood, it is clearly the doctrine of the scriptures that *God works all our works in us.* We can only turn from sin when he turns us; we can only work out our salvation when he works in us. In vain we wait on God, and pray, and vow; it is only when he quickens us that we shall keep his law. In vain we wage war against sin, and watch and wrestle; it is only by the Spirit dwelling in us that we shall be able to mortify the deeds of the body. In vain we search the Scriptures and examine ourselves, we shall never understand what we are, until the Spirit shines upon his own word, and upon his work in our hearts, bearing witness with our Spirits that we are the children of God. In vain we read the soothing promises of the Word and seek unto God, we shall never know peace till the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, be given us.—We are not of ourselves naturally, nor do we by our own exertions become, nor do we make Christ to us, but Christ *is*, and *is made*, and made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

III. Man, as a labourer in God's service, is dependent on him as the God of blessing, for the whole success of his labours.—We are all the hirelings of God; we are all to be employed in building up and defending Zion. And we are all ready to put some trust in man, and ascribe some of the praise to him. We are ready to suppose when men of great talents and piety are employed in preaching the Gospel, that much good must necessarily be done; as if God were confined to the use of means; as if he must work according to their quality, or rather as if it were the work of man to convert the soul, and build up in faith. And where a blessing follows our labours, how ready are we to take credit to ourselves as if we were something more than instruments. Man may do much in promoting the outward reformation and comfort of the life, but until God works, nothing is done for the soul. Man may call on sinners to repent,—God only can give repentance. Man may cry to them to awake and arise from the dead,—God only can give them life. Man may set the light before them,—God only can open the eyes to see it. Man may tell them their duty,—God only can make them perform it. Paul may plant and Apollas water; the most able, faithful and successful ministers of Christ may combine and do their utmost, and yet nothing is done unless God give the increase. Neither he that planteth nor he that watereth is any thing in respect to the success of their labours. Nor, could we employ means far more imposing than those which God ordinarily employs, would they have any greater efficacy. If we had the power of working miracles in confirmation of the Gospel, this would not make men believe it, for they have seen signs from heaven and yet rejected it. If we could call departed spirits to bear witness from their

own experience, to the truth and importance of the Gospel, this would not convince ; for, *If men hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*—Such is the hardness of the heart, that a spirit from the abodes of bliss, speaking in the enraptured strains of heaven, and charming never so wisely, could not effectually allure ; nor a spirit from the abodes of darkness, shrieking the despair of hell, effectually arouse. No, not even the voice of God, should he open the windows of heaven and call, not even this would awaken. Do you doubt ? Did not God speak audibly from heaven, when from the darkness, clouds and tempests of Sinai, he gave forth his law in thunders to the trembling people, and did they not then, at the foot of that dreadful mountain, while yet the symbols of God's presence were in their sight, while yet his voice was sounding in their ears, make a calf and worship the work of their own hands ? Did not God speak audibly to man, when a voice from heaven proclaimed to the crowd assembled on the banks of Jordan, *This is my beloved Son. hear ye him :* And did not this people refuse him and put him to death ? Christ dwelt from eternity in the bosom of the Father and knew all his mind—knew all the truth and power of his love to sinners, and the necessity and excellence of his blessings, having been familiar with the mansions of glory. Christ knew better than any other the awful desert of sin, and the power of God's wrath, having struggled with the powers of darkness, and endured the horrors of eternal death. Christ knew better than any other, all that is in the heart of man and every avenue to his heart. Christ could speak of all these things as never man spoke, and enforce his instructions by such an example as never man exhibited ; yet he tells us that *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.* And in confirmation of this truth, as well as for the encouragement of his poor servants, many of whom are bowed down under a sense of their great weakness, guilt and unprofitableness, even Christ condescended to be despised and rejected more than many of his weak disciples.

Ministers are builders and watchmen, yet only the *means* by which God builds and keeps his church. The man whose name is the Branch, he builds the temple of the Lord and bears the glory : the man Christ Jesus, the Branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious, he builds the church by the price of his blood and the power of his Spirit ; and to none other must this work be attributed or the glory of it ascribed. We sometimes read and hear of the astonishing things which men do, how many they convert, and how much they revive decaying zeal ; but we never read such things in the Bible. When three thousand were added to the church under the ministry of Peter, we are not told that he converted them ; that this was at all owing to the astonishing matter, or powerful eloquence of his sermon. There is no notice taken of the manner in which he acquitted himself, whe-



ther he spoke with great power, boldness and authority, or with weakness and fear, and much trembling. There is scarcely any notice taken of the instrument at all, but the whole praise is given where all was due; *The Lord added to the church of such as should be saved.* The Lord who works with equal ease by many or by few, by the weak or by the strong, and often by the weakest efforts of the weak, he did this great work. And whenever the heart is opened to receive the word, it is God who opens it, and not the eloquence or arguments of men. Whenever men are stirred up to diligence, it is the Lord who quickeneth.—Wherever the Word is accompanied with any power, it is the power of God's Holy Spirit. Beware then of looking to man, and think not this a common and pardonable weakness, for the blighting curse of heaven is pronounced against it. *Thus saith the Lord; cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*

T. B.

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For the Religious Monitor.

## ON MINISTERIAL UNFAITHFULNESS.

“Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod.”

*Castle of Indolence.*

Of all the relations in which man can stand to man, that of the Christian pastor to his flock is unquestionably the most solemn and responsible. The duties belonging to the pastoral life are exceedingly various, and proportionally arduous. If we form our estimate of these duties from the oracles of inspiration, we will perceive them to cover such an extensive field, that we may well exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?” We will find them to comprise not merely the services of the pulpit, but unceasing care and vigilance over the spiritual concerns of the flock. The Christian pastor is to “be instant in season and out of season”—to teach, not only publicly, but from house to house—to warn the unruly—to reclaim backsliders—to comfort mourners—to guide the wanderer—to establish the weak—to bind up the broken-hearted—to be present at the bed of sickness and of death. In a word, as a faithful shepherd, he is to be always at his post, observing and endeavouring to meet every case of each individual of the flock. And a fearful woe is denounced against those indolent and faithless shepherds who “feed not the flock—who do not strengthen the diseased—nor heal the sick—nor bind that which is broken—nor bring again that which is driven away—nor seek that which is lost.” See Ezekiel, xxxiv.

Among the churches of the Reformation, in former times, the solemn responsibility resting on the ministers of the Gospel, was in a good degree recognised, and ministerial duties, private as well as public, were generally discharged with a commendable



degree of diligence and fidelity, and an indolent or careless pastor commonly met with the contempt which he deserved. But now we behold a sad reverse. The clergy have, it seems, discovered, that all this anxious care and incessant labour for the glory of God and the good of souls, is altogether unnecessary.— They have found out an easier way of fulfilling their ordination vows. The arduous duties of public catechising and family visitation, together with all the train of pastoral assiduity connected with them, are now in a great measure laid aside, and ministerial labours principally confined to the pulpit. It is a fact too, which claims our serious attention, that instead of pulpit labours being increased by discarding more private services, the former are greatly diminished. It is true that there are still some who steadily observe the good old way, in catechising and visiting their people. But it is well known that the number of such is comparatively small. And even among *them* there is too much of an accommodating spirit gaining ground. The pastors of olden times were accustomed steadily to visit and catechise all their flocks, at least once every year, in addition to occasional services, which necessarily varied with circumstances. But of late many think that they discharge their duty with sufficient faithfulness, if they visit their congregations one year, and catechise them the next. Where even this is done, it is so far well; but it is doing by far too little. It is at least approximating to those indolent and careless habits, which are desolating many fair portions of God's heritage. It is my wish to call the attention of your readers to some of the evils which result from this state of things; and which, there is reason to fear, will be still progressing, until some effectual measures are adopted to oppose a barrier against them.

1st, Then, it is obvious to the most superficial thinker, that such neglect must seriously affect a pastor's *public labours*.— One of the solemn charges given him by divine authority is, to "give to each of the flock his portion in due season." But how is it possible for a pastor to comply with this charge, who is unacquainted with their varied necessities? And how can he be acquainted with these, if he seldom or never meets them, except at the doors of the sanctuary? The regularity of their attendance on public worship may be known to him, and he may have the means of being acquainted with the general state of morals among them. But farther than this his knowledge cannot well extend. He cannot know their proficiency in religious knowledge. He cannot know how their souls are prospering. He cannot be acquainted with their attention to the duties of family religion. He cannot know their mistakes, their doubts, their difficulties, their fears or their hopes, their joys or their sorrows. It may indeed be replied, that let the pastor be as diligent and watchful as he can, still he may not know the state of his flock in these respects to the extent that could be wished. This will

readily be conceded, and to the faithful Christian minister it will be a source of grief. But unquestionably the balance is greatly in his favour. He may and will know much of the condition of his flock in spiritual things, which will enable him in a good degree to vary his subjects and the method of treating them, in adaptation to the cases of his people. But of this advantage the indolent and inattentive shepherd is necessarily deprived. His subjects may, in a general point of view, be exceedingly important. His discussions may be lucid and striking. And he may be justly considered an able and interesting preacher. But however his themes may shine, they must want that point which will reach the heart and conscience. If his preaching is at any time appropriate to any particular cases, it is because he draws the bow at a venture, and not because he takes any distinct or specific aim.

2nd. Another serious evil resulting from this neglect is, that it obstructs the exercise of that mutual affection, which should exist between a pastor and his people, and which is so necessary to the success of his labours. To an impartial thinker it will require no metaphysical reasoning to prove, that much of a minister's usefulness must depend on the mutual affection that subsists between him and his people. Reason teaches this to every man, and revelation confirms its truth. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring glad tidings!"—But is it reasonable to expect that the bonds of affection can be very closely drawn between those, who while standing in the most solemn relation, have so little intercourse with each other? Certainly not. Does that pastor manifest the yearnings of a father over his children, who keeps himself at such a distance from them, and takes so little care of their souls? How can he, in the spirit of candour, adopt the apostle's language as his own; "My little children, for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Were this his spirit, he would, like the same apostle, "willingly spend and be spent for their sake." Again, is it reasonable to suppose, that a people will cherish a very ardent affection for their spiritual guide, of whom they see so little, and who keeps them at such a revolting distance? No.—Common sense must tell them that he is unworthy of it, when they see him dragging so heavily, and permitting either indolence, or a worldly spirit, habitually to interfere with attention to their souls. Deplorably low indeed must be the tone of piety, before such a man can become the object of affection or esteem.

3rd. Another evil directly resulting from this neglect is, that it deprives the flock of that spiritual provision to which they are entitled, and which their pastor is solemnly charged to administer. The experience of every faithful minister of Christ will tell him, that the success attending his labours has been much owing to his private exertions. In these, if any where, he can obtain ac-

cess to the hearts and consciences of his people. Public instructions often fail from that prevalent disposition in men to apply what they hear to every body rather than themselves. But they cannot use this shield to ward off what they hear in private.— They are, in a manner, compelled to take it home to themselves. The instructions, counsels, admonitions, warnings, reproofs and consolations, which are thus tendered, have a personal direction given them which cannot so easily be repelled or set aside. Besides, it is to be remarked that the diversified cases which occur among a people, and require ministerial aid, cannot so easily be brought into the public, and there presented to the pastor. Nay, in many cases it would be altogether impracticable. And even where it could be done, people have very little encouragement to take such a course, when they see the man to whose care they have entrusted their souls, manifesting so little concern about the matter. I conclude, then, that however brilliant the talents of a minister of the gospel may be, and however extensive his acquirements, his people must be poorly fed, if they have to depend altogether on the weekly dole which they receive from the pulpit on the Lord's day.

4th. Again, such ministerial neglect deprives the rising generation of that care which is their due. The young are the hope of the future church; and it is unnecessary to say how much depends on the manner in which they are trained. The word of God is sufficiently explicit on this subject. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Every minister of Christ must consider the young as a most interesting and important part of his charge.— They are the lambs of his flock, whom he is commanded to feed with provision suited to their years and strength. But how is this to be done if he is seldom or never with them? The thing is impossible. For any effort that he makes, they will be left to grow up like heathens, ignorant of God and the things of God. It is true that the piety of parents may in some measure supply the defect. But I would ask, is it reasonable to expect that parents will cherish a due sense of their obligations in this matter, when they see their pastor so indifferent in the cause? Surely not. And even on the supposition that parents are conscientious and faithful, still the weight of a pastor's influence is wanting in the scale, to give their instructions and admonitions due effect. When we contemplate the alarming prevalence of ignorance and indifference in the rising generation, and consider how little is done by ministers of the gospel to stem the torrent, we cannot avoid the conclusion, that much of the depression of the church in ages yet to come, may be required at the hands of the clergy of the present day.

I am well aware that very many, and very specious pleas are adduced to excuse the neglect of which I am speaking. And I have not the smallest doubt that many pastors are so influenced

by them, as to live at ease in their consciences, imagining that they are discharging their duty, while their ministerial labours are confined to the Sabbath and to the pulpit. Let us then weigh their excuses in the balance of the sanctuary, and see whether they are not found essentially wanting.

The plea which some pastors urge for their neglect, is the following. "These private labours require talents of a peculiar kind, talents which I am well assured I do not possess, and therefore I cannot consider myself called to labour in this way."—This excuse I myself have heard advanced, and that with the appearance of perfect confidence. Now, to say nothing of the sinfulness of thus transferring our guilt to our maker himself, I would just observe, that if the excuse had any weight, it would militate against entering into the gospel ministry at all, but cannot operate in favour of neglecting its duties when once undertaken. It is readily conceded that the sovereign dispenser of good and perfect gifts has distributed to different individuals severally as he will. Even among those who have his call to the gospel ministry, there is a wide and striking difference. Some excel in one department, and some in another. But I have no hesitation in affirming, that he calls no man to labour in any sphere, whom he leaves *totally* disqualified for any part of its duties. If men are entirely unqualified for such services as these, they may and ought to know it before entering into the sacred office; and then it will, or at least should, prevent them from assuming the responsibility of services which they are altogether unable to perform. But it is to be remembered, that while the capacity for such services is the gift of God, it is a talent given to be improved, and it can be improved only by exercise. Many a man believes himself unfit for such services, because he has not tried them, or has made the trial too superficially to form any correct judgment in the case. In such circumstances, the inability for which he pleads is wholly of a moral nature. It lies in the indisposition of the will, and not in any physical defect. And will men dare, not only to neglect their duty, but to plead their mental aversion to it as an excuse for the neglect? To such we would say—weigh well the solemn obligations that rest upon you. Engage in the discharge of your duty with determined resolution, and dependance on divine direction. Persevere in it with fidelity, and you will in time acquire a fidelity in its discharge of which you are now hardly able to conceive yourselves capable.

Again, it is objected that the services for which I plead are exceedingly laborious. This is readily admitted. In respect of either bodily or mental labour, I have no hesitation in saying, that pulpit services do not comprise the half, nay, perhaps the third, of what a minister of the gospel ought to do, especially in a scattered country charge. But, my dear brother, did you enter into the gospel ministry expecting to enjoy your ease? If



you did, you have most egregiously failed in counting the cost. The whole tenor of God's word represents the work of the ministry as a work of incessant labour. You know whose authority enjoins it upon us to "be instant in season and out of season." If we are unwilling to spend and be spent in the cause of God, we are unworthy of our sacred office. The work is laborious. What then? Is it more laborious than many other employments, in which motives of self-interest impel men resolutely to persevere? Is it more laborious than the work of the medical practitioner? Yet his labours only regard the perishing body—yours regard the soul. The work is laborious. True. And have you not the promise to encourage you, "as thy day is so shall thy strength be?" And are not the motives to exertion in your case the strongest that can operate upon the mind of man, viz, the glory of God and the eternal salvation of precious souls? And are not the encouragements in your case large and ample?—"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Away then with such a plea. If indolence, or backwardness to labour be unsuitable in any case, it is peculiarly, nay, degradingly so, in yours. After all, there is nothing in the aspect of these services so terrible as to frighten any man in ordinary health, provided that he has system and perseverance. The former will enable him to divide his labour so as to prevent it from being oppressive. The latter will prevent him from fainting or being discouraged because he cannot perform all his labour at once.

Again, it is objected that the services in question are not only laborious, but of an irksome and self-denying nature. In addition to many incidental privations of an outward kind, the mind revolts from the ignorance, the stupidity, the waywardness, the thoughtlessness, which it has incessantly to encounter. Much of this, I grant, is as you say. The picture is not overcharged. But let us remember that these are the diseases of the mind, which render the presence and exertions of the spiritual physician especially necessary. What would we think of a physician who should refuse his presence at a bed of sickness, because there is something loathsome in the patient, or obstinate in the disease? The application is easy. It is not the whole that stand in need of the physician, but they that are sick. Much of what was said in answer to the former objection is applicable here.—But after all, is there no bright side to the picture? Is all shade, and no light? Say, is there no relief to the mind in the intercourse which you have with God's saints? Is there nothing refreshing to the soul in the directions which you can sometimes give them, or the consolations which you are enabled to impart? Is there nothing gladdening to your heart in the discoveries which you make of the success of your labours, appearing in the personal character, and shining forth in the domestic circle? Is there nothing cheering to your spirit in beholding the rising ge-

neration training up to holy warfare under your superintendence, and preparing to step forth to the help of the Lord against the mighty? Yes, there is much to cheer and gladden the heart.—The light predominates over the shade. I do not hesitate to affirm, that to the gospel minister whose mind is in a proper tone, these services furnish a truly delightful employment, notwithstanding all the irksomeness and self-denial with which they are attended.

But the most formidable objection of all remains behind, viz, this, "I have not time to attend to such services. It is my duty to provide for my family. In doing so, I am compelled to devote so much of my time to secular affairs that I have little or none to spare for congregational labours." To meet this objection as it should be met, is no easy task. It has so many strong holds in which to entrench itself, that if beaten from one, another is ready at hand to receive it. But it may be observed in general, that the objection proceeds upon mistaken grounds. I admit that it is a sacred duty to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." It will not, however, follow from this, that ministers of the gospel are authorized to neglect the spiritual concerns of their flocks, in order that they may vie with the rich and great in splendour and magnificence. Nor will it follow that they are authorized, in any case, to make the work of the ministry a secondary object. There is no class of men upon whom the obligation more imperiously rests, to study industry, prudence and economy, in the management of their temporal concerns. In these, as well as other things, they are to be an ensample to the flock. But, on the other hand, there is no class of men in whom luxury or ambition, or a worldly spirit, appears so strikingly unbecoming, or so inconsistent with the injunctions of God's word. The objection also takes it for granted, that if ministers of the gospel attend faithfully and incessantly to their pastoral duties, their temporal interests must inevitably suffer. But is not this a criminal distrust, both of God's providence and promise? We are often telling others of their duty to trust in the promises of God, to be faithful in the discharge of their duty, and to commit their concerns to his management. May they not, in such cases, reply to our prescriptions, "physician heal thyself?" We have many promises in the Bible, the spirit of which is clearly this, "Take care of my cause, and I will take care of yours." I would likewise propose to the objector the following pertinent query: When you took upon yourself your solemn ordination vows, did you not pledge yourself to God that you would, at all hazards, attend to the work of the ministry, and according to his injunction give yourself wholly to it? Or did you only mean to promise that your fidelity and diligence would vary with circumstances; that if there was no worldly impediment in your way, you would be faithful, but otherwise, you must slacken your hand? If the latter was really your intention, I know not how

you can exculpate yourself from the charge of prevaricating both with God and man. If the former was your design, I entreat you seriously to ask yourself, whether you are paying your vows. You may lose sight of these vows yourself, and your people may lose sight of them also, but they are recorded on high. But still it may be urged, "the support which I receive is so small and so badly paid, that I am reduced to the necessity of devoting my attention to something else, otherwise my family would suffer." The complaint, is in many cases, too well founded. The obligation to support the gospel and its ordinances is not recognised or felt to the extent that it ought. But while I admit this, I would beg leave to make two qualifying remarks. The first is, that such a plea has become so common that it is made in a great many cases where it is unquestionably without any foundation. Many pastors habitually act upon it, who are evidently not only in easy, but in affluent circumstances.—The second remark is, that the indolence and unfaithfulness of the clergy is one of the leading causes that have contributed to produce in the people a spirit of indifference to the support of the gospel. When people see those who are set for the defence of the gospel manifesting so much of a disposition "to make God's work a sinecure," is it any wonder that they should become indifferent whether they were supported or not? It would be wonderful indeed were it otherwise. And this spirit, when once imbibed, gradually diffuses itself wider and wider, until, like an overwhelming flood, it sweeps all along with it, faithful and unfaithful, indiscriminately. While, therefore, I would say, let ministers of the gospel faithfully discharge their trust, and then demand of their people a competent support, not as a matter of favour, but of undoubted right; I would say on the other hand, let the people take a firm stand, and tell their pastors, both in word and deed, "Discharge your duty, and we will discharge ours. Be faithful in sowing among us spiritual things, and you shall reap our carnal things, but not otherwise."—The obligation here is not all on one side. It is mutual.—Let ministers and people both recognise it as such, and then we may reasonably expect to see a visible reformation in both.

It was my design to advert to some other topics, but these remarks have already occupied too much of your paper.

I am, yours,

PHILALETES.



QUERIES.—Can Legislative authority be properly and *successfully* interposed to prevent the profanation of the Sabbath?

Is the *example* of professors, in their individual and collective capacities sufficient to do this?

Is not much of the guilt of the profanation of the Sabbath chargeable upon professors, and must not reform commence at the house of God? W.

An answer to each or any of the above queries, is respectfully requested.

## Selections.

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### REVIEW OF MILLER, DICKEY, AND DUNCAN, ON CREEDS AND COMMUNION.

(*Concluded from page 317*)

Since loose communion is contrary to the use of Creeds and Confessions, and has no tendency to harmonize or unite the different denominations into one body, but the reverse, what shall be done in order to effect so great and salutary an object?—Keeping in view the utility and necessity of creeds, there is manifestly but one course to be pursued: let the several denominations, or rather the orthodox among them, form or select for the whole one Confession of Faith, leaving out no past attainments, in the adoption, maintainance and application of which, let all unite. The discussions to which such a measure would lead, must awaken a love of truth, diffuse intelligence, favour the cause of sound doctrine, and lead to results, highly beneficial to the interests of the church. We think every sensible man, who approves of creeds and confessions, must see that every other scheme of union is worse than nugatory.

That the well-selected and well-conducted arguments of Dr. Miller, have settled the question of the utility of creeds, we think all his unprejudiced readers must admit. At Princeton, we are happy to learn, the professor's lecture has put the question to rest among the students of theology. In his answers to objections, his arguments are candid and conclusive. In reviewing so very fine a production, both as to its manner and matter, it is painful to be compelled, by a sense of duty, to enter our dissent on any topic. But painful as it is, we cannot but dissent from the following doctrine. (pp. 71—2.)

“You will, perhaps, ask me, what shall be done by a man who loves the Presbyterian church; who considers it as approaching nearer to the scriptural model than any other with which he is acquainted; who regards its Confession of Faith as by far the best, in its great outlines, and in all its fundamental articles, that he knows; and who yet, in some of its minor details, cannot entirely concur? Can such an one honestly subscribe, without any previous *explanation* of his views? I answer—by no means. Ought he then, you will ask, to abandon all thoughts of uniting himself with our church, when he is in cordial harmony with it in all fundamental principles, and nearer to it, in all respects, than to any other church on earth? I again answer—by no means. I know of no other mode of proceeding in such a case as this, which christian candour, and a pure conscience will justify, than the following: Let the candidate for admission unfold to the Presbytery before which he presents himself, all his doubts, and scruples, with perfect frankness;—opening his whole heart,



as if on oath; and neither softening nor concealing any thing. Let him cause them distinctly to understand, that if he subscribe the Confession of Faith, he must be understood to do it in consistency with the exceptions and explanations which he specifies. If the Presbytery, after this fair understanding, should be of the opinion, that the excepted points were of little or no importance, and interfered with no article of faith, and should be willing to receive his subscription, in the usual way, he may proceed.—Such a method of proceeding will best accord with every principle of truth and honour; and will remove all ground of either self-reproach, or of reproach on the part of others, afterwards."

Now, we ask our readers, we ask Dr. Miller himself, whether the course of procedure recommended in the above article, is not utterly inconsistent with the whole of his preceding argument? Whether it does not give to Presbyteries the power of setting aside any article of the confession, which they may deem important? On this scheme, Arius might have subscribed the Nicene creed, if he could have found a Presbytery, that deemed the doctrines of the trinity of persons in the Godhead, and the divinity of Christ, unimportant. If there are "*some minor details*" that may be dispensed with, why are they in the confession?—The whole church, in its highest judicatory, has introduced those details into its terms of communion, and thereby declared them indispensable. May a Presbytery contradict this solemn decision of the higher judicatory? Who gave them this power? It never was given them; it never could be given to them, consistently with the statute adopting the confession as a term of communion. Have juries, have courts, the power to set aside the constitutional laws, enacted by the legislature? Were any man, on appearing before a court to swear the oath of allegiance, to state to the court, that he disapproved of negro slavery, recognised in the Federal Constitution, or of any other article in that instrument, and that he would not swear the oath, unless he were allowed to except such article, would the judge be justifiable in allowing the exception? By so doing he would violate his oath of office, and be guilty of bad faith to the nation. It would still be worse, if the judge admitted the explanation in private, as would evidently be done in the case that Dr. Miller supposes; for we cannot think that these explanations would be made before the congregation, on the day of ordination. The congregation think he swears to the whole instrument, as no exception is made in taking the oath. They are not treated honestly. Perhaps the congregation, who have called the candidate on the footing of the confession, as Dr. Miller mentions, in another part of his lecture and as even Unitarians do—perhaps they would not deem the exceptions unimportant. Who knows, if they would accept him at all as their pastor, did they know his views? But were they made in the public congregation, when the questions of the formula are put to him, which never

has been done, and which, we are persuaded, never will, what effect would it have on the people? Certainly it would tend to degrade in their estimation, both the instrument and those who adopted it, as a term of communion. The court, they would say, sets it aside to accomodate this man, it cannot be important. Add to all this, how does it look for one to say, "I do not approve of all that is contained in that instrument, yet I will swear and subscribe it, and thus send my name down to posterity, as giving it my most solemn approbation?" On this principle, a man might swear to the shasters of the Hindoo brahmins, or to the Koran of Mahomet. If this dispensing power be lodged in the presbyteries in favour of candidates for the ministry, you cannot refuse it to sessions in favour of applicants for membership; and so the confession is virtually abolished.

Dr. Miller is aware that this course has been pursued in the Presbyterian Church. He knows it was done at the ordination of Mr. Spring, in New-York. We are sorry to see him weaken his argument, and even utterly undo it, in accommodation to the practice of the church to which he belongs. We do not say this was his design, but we do say such is the fact. Only for this saving clause, on Dr. Miller's whole argument, Hopkinsians must be excluded from the ministry in the General Assembly.—After all, we hope that one who has so ably combatted some of the leading Hopkinsian tenets, as Dr. Miller has done, would not call those parts of his confession, which are Hopkinsian, "*minor details.*"

With the exception alluded to above, we earnestly recommend to our readers, this lecture of professor Miller, as a valuable addition to our Christian literature.

We now proceed to Dr. Dickey's pastoral letter to the members of three denominations. As the author of this letter is one of those ministers of the Associate Reformed Church, who have connected themselves with the General Assembly, and as he has since been made a doctor of divinity, it is what might be expected, that he would exhort others to follow his example.—This, however, he does not do directly. His professed object is, to prove them guilty of sin, in not practising intercommunion with the Presbyterian, and other denominations around them. This argument, bating some sneers at "superior attainments," &c. is temperately conducted, and evinces some thought and reflection. We doubt not that he is honest and really wishes well to those whom he has been pleased to take under his pastoral care, provided they adopt his views. In the mean time, we fear, he had some intention to bring upon them popular odium. Is it not with this view that he represents their strict communion as deposing all the ministers with whom they refuse to join? This he does (p. 19.) "I simply ask," says he, "brethren, what you could do more by a formal act of deposition, than to cut off from ministering to you and those who think with you,

all those ministers of other denominations with whom you reject ministerial fellowship?" All this, however, may pass for what it will command in the market.

The basis of Dr. D.'s argument is expressed in the following words (p. 7)—"Indeed it follows from the very notion of baptism, as a seal of the covenant of grace, that all who believe, *on giving satisfactory evidence of their faith, are to be baptized.*" And again, "There is not a shadow of evidence, in a single case, that any thing farther was required" (in the apostolic age) "from the candidates for baptism, beyond satisfactory evidence that they believed the word of the Gospel." (Ibid.) He connects baptism and the Lord's supper together, in the case of adults. Hence, with him, the sole qualification for fellowship in these ordinances, is saintship. On this principle, creeds and confessions must be proscribed, at least all those of the present Protestant churches; for all must admit that a man may be a Christian who has learned comparatively few of their doctrines. We would even submit to the judgment of every sensible reader whether a person might not be converted—might not be a real believer, who had never heard of either baptism or the Lord's supper.—Is he, therefore, because a believer, to be admitted to those ordinances, before their nature has been explained to him? We would farther ask, how much of the doctrines of the system of grace must he know before he can have an adequate knowledge of these ordinances?

Dr. Dickey must admit that some degree of knowledge is necessary in order that a candidate for admission to the privileges of the church, may give "satisfactory evidence of the faith of the gospel." The wisdom and experience of the church have taught her, or she has thought they taught her, that she should demand an intelligent assent to all that is contained in her creeds and confessions. If this be not meant by those formularies, they mean nothing. In obedience to the divine command "open ye the gates that the righteous nation that *keepeth the truth* may enter in," the church has resorted to the use of a *form* of sound words, and has said that all those who with knowledge assent to this form, have a life and consolation becoming the gospel, and profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him, and none others shall be admitted into her fellowship. Have the churches which Dr. D. addresses demanded too much? If they have, why does he not point out what is redundant? He mentions indeed the Baptists as persons with whom we ought to hold intercommunion, and leaves us to infer that the doctrine of infant baptism should not be embraced in our creed; as a little, unimportant matter, which should not keep Christians apart in their communion. But in fact his scheme of intercommunion, goes, as we have already found in this article, to the abolition of all those formularies.

Again, does Dr. D. really think, as he seems to intimate, that all those who are suspended from the communion of the church are to be considered as "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity?" He says, (p. 17,) "Christians may fall into this sin" (if being busy bodies, 2 Thess. iii. 6) "but while they continue in it, their credible profession is destroyed." Of course, on his scheme, they are to be held as unregenerate, before they are suspended. But Paul calls such a person "a brother." "withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." He says farther, "count him not as an enemy, but exhort him as a brother." Every unregenerate man is an enemy, and not a brother in the Lord. In truth, Paul guards the Thessalonians against that very extreme to which Dr. D. is driven by his scheme. Do not think, as if he would say, that because he is really a busy body and deprived of the privileges of the church, that he has no grace; hope better things of him, and exhort him kindly, as one who may withal be a believer. Indeed the history of the lives of most saints, as David, Solomon, Peter, &c. forbid this most uncharitable conclusion of the Doctor. It is sore pressure in the warfare against truth, that forces him to draw this unhallowed weapon in his defence. We would ask him to say candidly, whether he thinks every man that his session suspends, to be in a graceless state? He has, we are confident, too much charity. But then, if he admits that one who in the judgment of charity is to be esteemed a brother in the Lord, may be suspended from communion, his whole scheme is ruined; for the only requisite qualification for communion is, as people say of the subjects of revivals, hopeful piety. Then he would fail in fastening upon three denominations of Christians the odium of denying by their practice, that any of their brethren, not of their own denomination, are Christians. Yet with all these losses which he would sustain, we could almost venture to leave the matter to his own decision, by answering this question. Do you think every man legally suspended from communion an unbeliever?

Christ demands knowledge of communicants. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning (having knowledge of) the Lord's body." 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. In opposition to this it would appear that the great fear of many people is, that there shall be too much Christian knowledge, too much orthodoxy.

Dr. Dickey asserts, (p. 23,) that the members of all those denominations that are acknowledged to be churches of Christ, "are in full visible communion together; as really so, to all intents and purposes, as the members of any of these churches are in communion with one another." Again, (p. 24,) "professing Christians, belonging to different denomination of Christ's church, being thus really of one communion, are as much re-



sponsible for one another as if they all belong to the same denomination. And *declaring* a separation, does not in the least lessen our responsibility for the errors and immoralities that prevail among them." All this he says, very truly, may appear paradoxical. If this were correct, then Abraham would be chargeable with and responsible for all the errors and immoralities of the people of Ur of the Chaldees, who worshipped idols beyond the flood; and Israel would have been responsible for all the errors of that church in which Baalam, the son of Beor, ministered. Our fathers, in the early part of the reformation, would have been responsible for all the errors of Popery; for they recognised their baptism and ordination. Dr. Dickey and all other Presbyterians are, on this theory, responsible for all the errors of Socinians in the established church of Scotland, in that of England and Ireland, and in the congregational churches of New-England. Is he prepared to admit all these fearful consequences? If he is not, he must abandon the argument in which he appears to triumph. Indeed, the whole of this scheme which Dr. Dickey advocates, really resembles that which was broached by Ammonius Saccas in the second century. Saccas "attempted a general coalition of all sects."\* He was a teacher in the Alexandrian school of theology, possessed great talents; his scheme was popular, and spread extensively. Dr. Mosheim says, "it would be endless to enumerate all the pernicious consequences that may be justly attributable to this new philosophy, or rather to this monstrous attempt to reconcile falsehood with truth and light with darkness."†

Dr. Dickey tells us (p. 21)—"Pretensions to superior orthodoxy and superior strictness will necessarily awaken an eagle-eyed scrutiny towards those who make them; and unless these pretensions are borne out by something more than a profession, and strictness in the forms of godliness; unless they are justified by the practice of superior charity, tenderness and humility, sobriety, honesty, and every other Christian virtue, which will not always be the case, no indulgence will be shown." And what then? Was this not the case with respect to the early Christians, and with respect to the reformers? It is well for the friends of truth that the eagle-eye of scrutiny is open upon them, as it is an additional motive to godliness, and excites them "by a patient perseverance in well doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." In fact, that watchfulness which the several denominations exercise over one another is a great means of restraint to the evils to which all are prone, and a remarkable instance of God's good providence in overruling existing evils, so as to bring light out of darkness.

The writer seems here to insinuate that the members of the denominations which he addresses are not equal in their Chris-

\* Mosheim's Ecc. Hist. vol. I. p. 140.

† Ibid, 144.

tian deportment to those of other and larger bodies with whom they refuse to unite or hold communion. Would he be willing that this should be put to the test by a detailed examination of the matter of fact? Such insinuations are cheap, and popular with those who cover their errors in principle and practice, with the infirmities of those who endeavour to maintain the truth, and support the cause of God. Dr. D. seems to estimate as nothing, "superior orthodoxy and strictness in the forms of godliness." "Charity, tenderness," &c. are every thing with him.

After all, Dr. D. makes this strange admission, (p. 12,) "That cases may occur which will warrant a separation, and the organization of a distinct *worshipping assembly*, in which the whole truth, to the last item, if possible, shall be publicly professed, and every thing scandalous in practice be discountenanced, is not refused. But that a separate *communion* should be established, from which not the heretical and scandalous only are excluded, but members of other churches, where the truth is professed, and the real worship maintained, is utterly refused." But would not this separate worshipping assembly, pretending to superior orthodoxy and strictness, awaken eagle-eyed scrutiny, and produce the bad passions? Would he admit to the communion those of less purity who shewed no indulgence? If he did, would this cure the evil? But could any thing be more preposterous, than to represent a *worshipping assembly* as more holy than the communion table? This admission destroys his whole argument. But how would this worshipping assembly profess the whole truth? It could not be by attending church; for that is done by many of the profane. It must be in baptism and at the communion table. But how could this be done without a Confession of Faith to which they professed their adherence in this separate assembly? And how could they hold and profess the truth embodied to the last item in their confession, when they freely admitted to sealing ordinances many who denied a large portion of those items? The doctor seems to separate the sealing ordinances from the truth, as if they had no connection, or at least very little, with each other. He ought to reflect that baptism and the Lord's supper are seals of the covenant, and that the covenant is a great system of truth, to which in partaking of these seals, believers give their assent and seal their approbation. To pretend to maintain and profess the doctrines of the covenant in a worshipping assembly, and yet neglect them in the seal, is an utter absurdity. It would be like one saying, I hold to all that is in the bond, as good, but when I sign and seal the bond, much must be left out.

But enough has been said to unveil this masked battery on creeds and confessions. We do not, however, affirm positively, that Dr. D. intends to attack, in this pamphlet, those formularies as terms of communion, though we are certain that his whole argument goes to their utter abolition; and so plain does this appear

to us, that we think a man of his sense could not fail to perceive and intend it.

We now proceed to the consideration of Duncan's Remarks, &c. with which we shall not long detain our readers. This book we think bears evident marks of the writer's zeal for what he esteems a good and important cause, but we are constrained to say, that while he aims at deep research, fine writing and oratorical display, he utterly fails in all.

The introduction consists of 29 pages, occupied by the author in vindicating his integrity against an attack made on it in the Christian Advocate, edited by Dr. Green. Mr. Duncan, a few hours before he preached his sermon against creeds and confessions, had subscribed, as a superintendent of the Princeton theological seminary, a formula, pledging himself to sustain in their integrity the standards of the Presbyterian church. The amount of his vindication is, that he *subscribed* the formula one year before, on a loose paper, and that when he appeared among the members of the board at Princeton, he merely complied with a form, and *transcribed* his name into a book kept for the purpose of registering the subscriptions. To us it appears this attempt at defence is an utter failure. The writing of his name in the book was a renewal of the former covenant, and on the footing of this renewal he took his seat in the board. If this is not so, the General Assembly have no security of any of their board that they will sustain the integrity of their standards. They had, we presume, precisely the same security of Mr. D. that they have of all their superintendents. Yet we are far from saying that he intended to act dishonestly in the transaction. His sermon immediately after, we think proves the contrary, and indeed is the best argument for his honesty of intention. The truth is, it has become so common, with pain we say it, to subscribe to confessions and creeds, without intending to maintain their whole doctrine, that the whole business is viewed as a *mere form*, like "your humble servant," at the bottom of a letter. We presume Mr. D. without much reflection complied with the form. We think this transaction and the prominence given to it in Dr. Green's review, and Mr. D.'s vindication, must arrest attention to a very important subject—to a great evil, which calls loudly for reform, and that good will result. Either let creeds be abandoned, or let them be subscribed with reflection, intelligence and good faith.

Mr. D. proscribes utterly all creeds and confessions as tests of orthodoxy, calling them instruments of tyranny and oppression, and affirms that they are calculated to impose restraints on the freedom of discussion, and to retard the progress of knowledge. The ground which he and all opposers of these formularies have taken, leads to universal scepticism in religion. They represent all past discoveries and attainments as uncertain, and that in the progress of knowledge it may possibly be found that every thing



contained in our creeds is false. Who ever thinks the definitions and axioms in mathematics, are instruments of tyranny in the schools, because the teachers enforce upon their pupils the duty of learning, and being guided by them; or that demonstrations of Euclid, and their application in surveying, navigation, &c. are calculated to repress inquiry; or that colleges act tyrannically in making a knowledge of them a prerequisite to the reception of degrees? Who thinks so of the principles of the Newtonian philosophy? No scholar, undoubtedly. Why?—Those scientific principles are deemed to be certain, impregnable, and undeniable. If the doctrines which are taught in the school of Christ by catechisms, creeds and confessions, be equally certain with the principles of science, then why this clamour?—Scepticism lies at the foundation of all opposition to these instruments. Has the church for eighteen centuries been employed in the laborious investigation of the oracles of the living God, without being able to discover in them as much truth as she has embodied in her creeds? We are surely not to be taught that the truths of God's covenant, on which all our hopes of salvation depend, are so uncertain as all this. But Mr. D. and others tell us that the Bible is our confession, and so plain that he who runs may read. If it is so plain, as undoubtedly it is, we are forbidden the thought that godly and learned men, in the progression of ages, have not been able to find its true import, as to the doctrines which are embodied in the formularies of the church. Surely it is time that we should hold the principles on which we raise a superstructure for eternity, as secure as those on which human science erects her fabric. If they are not, miserable are all our hopes of salvation, and frail is the rock on which we build for eternity. Allowing that the doctrines elicited by the church from the Holy Scriptures are thus certain, how can it be an act of tyranny to demand a profession of faith in them? How can it retard the march of knowledge? In our estimation, it is the best way to secure and accelerate it; as those who are best imbued with the elementary principles in the exact sciences, and most firmly persuaded of their truth, are furnished with the best, the only means of going on to fresh discoveries. "Whereunto ye have attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing." But we cannot prosecute this argument. For a comprehensive view of the whole ground, we refer our readers to Dr. Miller's lecture, the arguments of which are left untouched and indeed unapproached by Mr. Duncan.

Mr. D. denies that the church has any authority to enact laws binding the conscience; which is to deprive her courts of all authority, and annihilate all church government; one of the boldest attempts adventured upon in any age. In the early ages of Christianity, he denies that there were any presbyteries or synods; and he has shrewdness enough to perceive that he must take this wide range in his devastations, or creeds will still main-



tain their ground. It will be time enough to defend the order and government of the house of God, when we have something like argument, instead of mere declamation.

Mr. D. when speaking of the expulsion of Arius and his followers from the church, says, (p. 131,) "All nature frowns at the cruelty of persecution; and who ever imagined that persecution could drive the human mind from its range of thought, when holding communion with its great Creator?" Did Arius hold communion with his Creator while blaspheming his name and denying the glory of the Saviour? It seems Mr. D. thinks so. Indeed his whole history of the Arian controversy, and the formation of the Nicene creed, represents Arius and his party as persecuted men, and the Nicene fathers as tyrants, for excluding the heretics for not subscribing the creed which they formed.—Arians must then be allowed to enjoy the communion of the church; for how could they be excluded but by a creed, as they profess to believe the Bible! Surely it must be a bad cause which drives men to such extremes. Admit Roman Catholics, Socinians, Arians, Swedenborgians, Sabellians, and the whole host of heretics to the communion of the church, for they profess to believe the Bible!

At page 54, Mr. D. represents the Westminster divines as never intending the book that they framed to be a term of communion. This is contrary to the design of calling the assembly, to the design of appointing the commissioners from the church of Scotland, to the whole discussions of that venerable body, to the solemn League and Covenant, to the use made by the Scottish Church and by the English Presbyterians. He would represent that assembly as forming merely a body of divinity, when the professed and known object was to accomplish a uniformity in religion, between the kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland. It is contrary to the very name of the instrument.

In Mr. D.'s argument, *ad hominem*, against Dr. Miller, he would be in some measure successful, could he fix upon Dr. M. the charge of approving all the doings of the General Assembly. Congregationalists have been admitted into that body, by public acts, without acknowledging their Confession of Faith as their form of church government. Many Arminians are admitted into the communion of the church, many ministers who preach and publish Hopkinsian doctrines are allowed to enjoy all the privileges of the church among them; and in all this the General Assembly contravenes the whole of Dr. Miller's argument. But he has not shewn us that Dr. M. has given his approbation to all these doings, or that he is, except indirectly as a member of the body, chargeable with them.

We had intended to make several remarks on the inflated style, and instances of bad taste in the composition of this book. One specimen shall suffice. "Like a mountain of ice, loosened from its northern fixture, and hastening to dissolve under milder

suns, these ecclesiastical exotics droop, and wither, and die, where charity kindles her burning coals." (p. 132.) Confessions of Faith are ecclesiastical exotics, and yet they spring up in the church. The foreign plants too are like a mountain of ice, floating on the ocean and melting. As the mountain of ice droops, and withers, and dies, so do these plants. If confessions die like mountains of ice, or any thing else, the death blow must be inflicted by a stronger hand than that which wielded Mr. D.'s pen.

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PROFANE USE OF SCRIPTURE.

*On the Imitation of the Style of Scripture, in compositions of a Secular and Ordinary nature.*

Every period of Society has its own taste in literature, as well as in other things of a less important nature; and it is not a little amusing to trace the progress of this fluctuating principle through different ages. An affectation of extraordinary wit and ingenuity, has frequently given a colouring of extravagance and absurdity to the compositions of men of the finest natural parts, and this puerile ambition has from them descended into all classes of writers, till the public taste has become wholly corrupted. Other affectations and propensities have succeeded this aberration in their turn, and have successively stamped their colours on particular eras of time.

Of all the different kinds of composition that are cultivated in these modern days, so fertile in all matters of literature, the most extraordinary, perhaps, is that which professes to be an imitation of the peculiar form and phraseology of the Scripture narrations, particularly of those of the Old Testament. It has been somewhat fashionable of late, among the writers of a certain school, to work up their mystical and extravagant reveries with a considerable proportion of allusions to the incidents and descriptions contained in the sacred books. This practice has no doubt appeared, in the eyes of these individuals, an excellent means of giving to their writings an air of venerable antiquity, as well as a sublime simplicity, which nothing else could impart; although by more sober and judicious minds it is viewed in a very different light. He who reads his Bible for the sole purpose of culling some of its fairest images wherewith to embellish his otherwise worldly and profane compositions, is guilty of great levity in thus trifling with sacred things,—a levity which is the offspring of daring and presumptuous impiety. It is to be feared that many have consulted the Scriptures with no other purpose than to procure a fine conception, a tender sentiment, or a beautiful simile, or to discover an elegant expression, by which a period may be gracefully rounded.

This disgraceful mixture of sacred and profane things is justly offensive to all considerate persons. There is, however, a considerable difference between the turpitude of this sort of unhal-

lowed confusion of matters essentially distinct, and that bold presumption which affects to produce a fac-simile, or perfect imitation of the manner and language of the Holy Scriptures.—Several recent attempts have been made in this way, which loudly call for the severest animadversion. The love of fame, the desire of being thought witty, has occasionally tempted men of the most slender capacities to travel in this walk of literature. It has an easy and inviting appearance; and, when there exists no principle of reverence for the name and authority of God, to check any attempt at an unlawful interference with his Holy Word, we cannot be surprised to find persons now and then deviating into this forbidden and dangerous track. Profanity is so easily mistaken for wit, that many who enjoy the reputation of the latter quality, owe this distinction entirely to their being in undoubted possession of the former. Were this evil confined to the more gross and illiterate votaries of fame, it might be safely left to the natural operation of its own tendency to destroy itself; but as the public have seen flagrant instances of this indecent sporting with sacred things in recent publications of respectable literary pretensions, it must be deemed an imperious duty to protest, in the most decided manner, against such a practice. How can any considerate and Christian mind contemplate without emotions of indignation and shame, an effort to degrade the majesty and purity of the sacred Books, by an awkward and clumsy imitation of the most interesting and beautiful portions of prophetic description!—Could not the authors of such pitiful and paltry productions find any other vehicle for conveying to the public their ridicule of obnoxious characters, or their resentment against literary antagonists? If they could not, assuredly their invention is not of the first order. In writing such articles they have set at defiance the awful and mysterious judgments of God, which are plainly revealed as the portion of impious men, in the very books of Scripture which they wantonly attempted to imitate, in so ludicrous and criminal a manner; and, by publishing it, they have violated the feelings of the pious and intelligent Christian. It is impossible that any individual, who fears God, can thus trifle with the sacred Book.

Let us hear the author of the interesting and ingenious little volume, entitled, "*The Retrospect*," expressing his sentiments on this subject:—"I have not," says he, "the smallest recollection, while belonging to this ship, of ever seeing a Bible, though I once endeavoured to call to mind that sacred Volume, not with a view of remembering and applying any of its contents to my heart, but to dress up a ludicrous account of some late occurrences, in its peculiar language and solemn phraseology. And O how vain was I at the approbation these wretched epistles met with from fools, who made a mock at sin! With what delight did I hear them say, that I had thrown in my verily, verilies, and my lo, and behold, to much advantage!" This acute and en-

lightened person expresses, in this manner, his deep regret at the recollection of his former indecent tampering with the language of Holy Scripture; and will any individual, whose mind has been renewed in the spirit of it, venture to say, that such a use of the Bible, as is here reprobated, is either innocent or defensible? Certainly not. But "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." The Bible has had many enemies. It has been assailed by the learning of philosophers and historians—the wit and malignity of ingenious and accomplished scholars; but the arguments of the one class of infidels, and the unjust though bitter scorn and irony of the other, have been successfully refuted and exposed. The truth and divinity of the Scriptures have appeared more conspicuous by every effort to darken or deny them. The wickedness of man has found other engines for attacking the bulwarks of Christianity. Low and gross applications of scripture images, expressions and sentiments, profane quotations from the sacred books, and attempts at parodying or imitating their peculiar manner and language, have often produced pernicious effects on weak and ignorant minds. Ludicrous associations of feelings and ideas frequently occasion singular consequences, as any one who is at all acquainted with human nature may very well know. A jest passes with many people for sound argument; and he who cannot distinguish the difference between pretended wit and true wisdom, will readily enough join in the silly laugh at matters of a sacred and important nature. It must appear to every thoughtful mind a very high degree of profligacy to sport with the language of Holy Scripture in any shape whatever.

These ingenious persons who employ their talents in efforts of this nature, are really objects of pity and contempt. They deceive themselves with their own miserable endeavours, and to indulge a trifling passion for the applause of fools, expose themselves to the hazard of the awful displeasure of God.—Do such persons reflect at all on the enormity of their conduct, or tremble at the secret misgivings of a guilty conscience? Are they aware that, by using indecent freedoms with the sacred oracles, they are chargeable with promoting, in no ordinary degree, the professor of infidelity and irreligion; that they endeavour, as far as it is in their power, to counteract the blessed influence of the pure word which purifies the heart, elevates it above the transitory joys and sorrows of time, and furnishes the humble Christian with the most precious consolations in the prospect of death and eternity? Take away from the earth the belief of divine truth as it is exhibited in the Bible, and you leave the disconsolate eye nothing to contemplate with delight. Without it, all would be dark and dreary; nature would be enveloped in the blackness of midnight; man would exist without comfort and hope, and die in despair. The most exquisite taste for enjoying the beautiful variety of charms in nature cannot confer



happiness. If unendowed with the spirit of religion, the most feeling and cultivated minds are indeed far more wretched than those of the most thoughtless and rustic individuals. To rich and poor, to learned and unlearned, to men of refinement, or to ignorant peasants or mechanics, true religion is indispensably necessary in order to their enjoying happiness. The Bible alone contains the revelation of those truths which are perfectly suited to the condition of every descendant of Adam. An unhappy and guilty race can find no asylum from the sorrows occasioned by moral turpitude, or from the anticipations of future and eternal evils, but in the sure word of promise conveyed to us in the holy oracles. This only will prove an antidote to the trembling alarms of the perturbed spirit, fill it with sacred hope of forgiveness from the Author of all mercy and dispose it to rest in him as the source and centre of its repose. If this be a true representation of things, who that calls himself a Christian can venture to trample without reverence on this holy ground, or rashly and foolishly endeavour to lower the opinion of its sanctity in public estimation? It is not intended to insinuate that every person who has unhappily acquired a habit of unduly meddling with Scripture language, is fully sensible of the pernicious tendency of such a practice, or that he wishes such effects as we have described to take place. This concession, however, affects not in the smallest degree the justness of the views that have been given of its criminal and destructive nature; and he who can attempt to justify it, or to palliate its enormities, is at once chargeable with wilful blindness and deplorable stupidity.

[*Christian Instructor.*]

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## Religious Intelligence.

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### MADAGASCAR.

*From the Missionary Gazetteer.*

*Madagascar* is a very large Island in the Indian Ocean on the south east coast of Africa, from which it is separated by the Mozambique channel.— It is about 840 miles long and from 120 to 200 in breadth, and contains about 4 millions of inhabitants. In colour and features they resemble the negro race, though they are not quite so dark. They are intelligent and active, and manifest an unusual degree of tenderness and sympathy for unfortunate sufferers.

*Religion.*—The Madagasses believe in one only true God, the Creator of all things, and the preserver and supreme Ruler of the universe; whom they call *Zangahara*. When they speak of him they do it with the greatest degree of solemnity and veneration. Though they consider him so infinitely exalted, that he does not stoop to notice the concerns of men; yet he has delegated the government of the affairs of this world to 4 inferior lords, whom they denominate lords of the North, South, East and West. One of these

only, they consider the dispenser of the plagues and miseries of mankind; while the other three are engaged in bestowing benefits. The souls of all good men, they believe will, after death, ascend to Zangahara, and enjoy perfect happiness in his presence; while all bad men will be tormented according to their demerits, by the evil spirit, which they call *Ang-gatyr*. The 4 great lords are regarded by them as having great influence with Zangahara. Each family has its guardian angel, who conveys their prayers to the 4 lords, who are the only medium of access to the Deity. Some appearances of Judaism are seen among these islanders. They practice circumcision, and offer the first fruits of harvest. Of a Saviour they have no knowledge.

The *language* of the Madagasses is very melodious, and is said to be copious; though it had never been reduced to a written form till since Missionaries resided among them.

In the interior are some Arabs, who introduced into the island many of the arts of civilization. It is probably owing to the influence of these emigrants on the neighbouring tribes, that many of them exhibit evident marks of a state of improvement, considerably removed from barbarism.

King *Radama*, who styles himself the king of Madagascar, is a powerful prince, having at his command, some hundreds of thousands of well disciplined soldiers. Oct. 11, 1820, he entered into a treaty with his Excellency, governor *Farquhar* of Mauritius, on the part of his Britannic Majesty, for the final abolition of the slave-trade throughout the island. As conditions of this treaty, the British government was to receive under its protection and care, 20 Madagascan youths, who were to be thoroughly instructed in the various departments of the useful arts. Ten soon embarked for England, and 10 were sent to the island of Mauritius. In consequence of this treaty, and this alliance with the English nation, a wide door has been opened for the introduction of Christianity and the arts of civilization, and that of slavery bolted forever. Instead of a dealer in slaves, a powerful monarch has become a patron of Christian Missionaries. A population of 4 millions, devoted to no peculiar religion, and destitute of those almost invincible prejudices in favour of a national religion, which dwell in the breasts of almost every Hindoo, now claims the sympathies and prayers of the Christian world. A vast field is thrown open for pious labourers, and the protection and favour of a powerful monarch pledged in their behalf. Radama has expressed his decided predilection for Protestant Missionaries, by refusing to give a Catholic priest permission to send Missionaries to teach his subjects the Roman Catholic religion.

*Mission; L. M. S. 1818.*—Rev. *Thomas Bevan*, and Rev. *David Jones* visited this island in August, 1818, and immediately opened a school at *Tamatave*, by way of experiment. They were not a little gratified to witness so much willingness, on the part of the natives, for the education of their children; but early in the succeeding year, the Mission sustained a severe loss.—Mr. and Mrs. Bevan, with their infant child, together with Mrs. Jones and her infant, were, within a few weeks, removed by death. The state of Mr. Jones' health was such, as to require his speedy removal to Mauritius for its restoration, and the mission was abandoned. Notwithstanding these distressing occurrences, Mr. Jones resumed his labours on this island. In 1820, he accompanied the commissioner, Mr. *Hastie*, to Radama's palace, at *Tananarive*, situated far in the interior, and obtained the king's permission to instruct his subjects in the Christian religion, provided artisans could be procured to teach them also the useful arts. The king himself expressed his views on this subject to the L. M. S. who readily complied with his wishes. At the king's request, Mr. Jones remained at Tananarive, and opened a school for the instruction of the royal family. In 1821, he was joined by Rev. *David Griffiths* and wife, and in 1822, by Rev. *John Jeffreys* and wife, with four artisans.—Their reception by the king was marked with many tokens of kindness and joy. Every facility for the successful operations of the mission, and comfort of the Missionaries, was promptly made by Radama, who manifested a very strong desire for the intellectual cultivation, and moral improvement of his

subjects. The 3 Missionaries were furnished with suitable dwellings, chiefly at his own expense. The artisans were provided with work-shops, and native youths apprenticed to them, who give proofs of their capabilities by making rapid improvement.

The king has established an adult school for his officers, and has himself undertaken to instruct some of his own family. In 1823, there were 85 scholars in the mission-schools, some of whom had obtained considerable knowledge of Christianity, and of the English language. Two services were held on the Sabbath, in English. The prejudices against the object of the mission, which some of the people at first manifested, have greatly abated, and this island, which, a few years ago, presented the most affecting and appalling scenes of war, murder and rapine, and above all, which was itself the scene of all the horrors of the slave-trade, that outrage on humanity, already exhibits striking proofs of the benign influence of Christianity and civilization. A bright morn of intellectual and spiritual light has begun to dawn, which, it is hoped, will usher in the glorious day, that is to diffuse its benignant rays in every part of this hitherto neglected island.

The following extract from a letter of a Missionary, at Madagascar, taken from the *Christian Observer*, for July, shows the present state and prospects of Christianity in that heathen country, and here may it not be said with thankfulness as well as wonder? "What hath God wrought!"

"It is with inexpressible joy I inform you that I have important and very encouraging information to impart. The mission at Madagascar now wears a most pleasing and promising aspect. There are fourteen schools established, in which are taught about 1,200 children; and, were we furnished with sufficient means, many, very many more might be formed, as applications for teachers have been made from various quarters which we have not, as yet, been able to meet. Many of the youths in the Royal School have made commendable progress in learning; can read the Bible with facility; write a fair hand; are far advanced in arithmetic; and have acquired a general knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion. It is from this school that the villages have been supplied with teachers. The instruction of native females is likewise attended to. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Griffiths have more than 100 under their care. The children who have been with them from the beginning have become very clever at their needle. Messrs. Jones and Griffiths have commenced preaching in the native language. The number of people who attend is considerable. The prejudices of the natives are stronger, and their superstitious observances more numerous, than persons in England are aware of; but, blessed be God, they perceptibly lose ground."

The following is an extract from a recent letter from another missionary.

"I have the pleasure to inform you, that this mission has never worn a more promising aspect, than it has since last May. The King continues his protection to us, and gives us encouragement to labour with assiduity. We have twenty two schools established since last April, under his patronage, in which more than 2000 children are instructed. Our first scholars teach at the different villages; and their ardent pursuit after knowledge, and their unceasing assiduity in communicating instruction to others affords us great satisfaction and encouragement. Those villages that have above eighty scholars have four teachers; two to teach every other week by turns, while the other two are learning in town; so that they are one week learning and the other teaching. The scholars both in town and the country have learnt almost the whole of a large catechism which I have translated, and formed for the use of the schools.

"I have a chapel built annexed to my house. Mr. Jones and myself preach by turns when we are in town; one in English, and the other in Malagash.—About two months ago, Mr. Jones and I commenced visiting the villages where schools are established, to preach and catechise; we go by turns every Sunday. We have thronged congregations on the Sabbath; our chapel in town is

crowded, and the doors and windows lined. We have three or four, and sometimes 5,000 hearers in town, and often 2 or 3,000 in the country, besides the assembling of three or four schools. We catechise them first, and then we sing and pray, and preach, often in the open air. We ask them to repeat what they remember of the sermon, and we propose to them any question that may occur to us. The talents they display on these occasions would put many in England to the blush.

"I have translated the Book of Exodus, and the Gospels by Mark and Luke, and also part of the Psalms, as far as the 50th, and the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. I have also prepared a course of plain discourses. Mr. Jones has finished translating the Book of Genesis, and the Gospel by Matthew, and is far advanced with the Gospel by John, and the Acts, and with the First Book of Samuel, &c. He has prepared a series of discourses on the work of creation, and is also preparing discourses on the Divine attributes. Every thing is going on in union and peace.

### To the Patrons of the Religious Monitor.

We are happy to announce in answer to the enquiries of our friends, that there is a fair prospect of the continuance of our work. Through the kindness of our patrons, our subscription list is now such as to defray the expences of the current volume. And while this continues to be the case, and we are supported as we have hitherto been by the able contributions of our correspondents, it is our resolution not to give up the cause. We are every day more impressed with the necessity and importance of a periodical journal devoted to the support of the *great doctrines and principles of the Gospel*; and every exertion shall be made by us, to render the RELIGIOUS MONITOR more and more useful, and deserving of the patronage of a discerning religious public.

The following improvements in our plan, will be adopted in our next volume. By substituting a royal instead of a medium sheet, and folding it in a duodecimo form, we shall be able to furnish 48 pages of the same size that are now given, in the compass of two sheets. Without increasing the price to subscribers, the size of each number will thus be increased *eight pages*, (making an increase of 96 pages in the year,) and the expence of postage to those who receive it by mail will be *reduced one-third*.\* This arrangement will very considerably increase the expence of publication, but we trust that the list of our subscribers will be increased so as to defray it. The want of type has hitherto compelled us to give our INTELLIGENCE in the same type as the body of the work. This deficiency is now supplied, and by putting it in small type, we can give one-third more matter in the same space.

In accordance with the wishes of many of our friends, it is also proposed to devote a page in each number to the record of LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC NOTICES; and from two to three, to a monthly REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, after the manner of the London Christian Observer, and the Philadelphia Christian Advocate. Any hints for the improvement of our plan forwarded before the commencement of the volume shall receive due attention.

To enable us to meet the increased expence of publication, our agents and patrons are respectfully requested to use their endeavours to obtain additional subscribers, and to forward a list of their names before the first of May, and to make their remittances as speedily as possible. The continuance and increase of the contributions of our correspondents, so indispensable to the interest and success of our work, are also respectfully solicited.

Should sufficient encouragement be given, the Monitor will be printed on a much superior quality of paper to that now used.

\* The rates of postage for the next volume, being two sheets per number, instead of three as at present charged at the Post-Office, will be as follows:

Carried not over 100 miles, 3 cents; and carried to any part of the United States, 5 cents per number.